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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Government shies away from responsibility on Iraq - Milliyet
AKP group unconvinced, decree delayed - Turkiye
Erdogan's tough time to convince his deputies - Vatan
UNSC says 'No' to war - Hurriyet
Saddam agrees to destroy Al-Samud missiles - Sabah
Bush: Our struggle for the future of Muslims - Sabah
Arafat next after Saddam - Aksam
Annan effort to by-pass Denktas - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
Decree struggle between government and presidency - Radikal
Government takes refuge in NSC - Cumhuriyet
AKP MPs: U.S. disloyal - Yeni Safak
Bush: Democratic Iraq will pave way for Palestine state -
Radikal
Kurdish leaders acting provocatively - Cumhuriyet
Annan gives Turks, Greeks ten days - Zaman

FINANCIAL JOURNALS
Government's economic performance victimized by war - Dunya
U.S. oil reserves diminishing, prices up to \$38.66 -
Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: The government has decided to wait for Friday's National Security Council (NSC) meeting before taking the decree for foreign troop deployment in Turkey to the parliament on Saturday. President Sezer's warning about the lack of international legitimacy for an Iraq operation has forced the government to seek the counsel of the NSC. "Cumhuriyet" and "Milliyet" blame the government for 'hiding behind the NSC' after having failed to obtain solid guarantees from the U.S. Papers say that the U.S. has given Turkey no guarantees of blocking the establishment of a Kurdish state, and reports suggest continued ambiguity regarding the economic aid package. "Vatan" claims that the voting was delayed due to strong opposition among AKP deputies. Dailies expect 38,000 of the total 45,000 U.S. troops deployed in Turkey to pass into northern Iraq, with the remaining 7,000 to be stationed on Turkish soil. 60,000 Turkish troops will set up a 30 km security zone inside northern Iraq. Northern Iraqi Kurdish groups, upset by the fact that Turkey and the U.S. are close to a compromise, staged protest demonstrations against Turkey in Erbil. KDP leader Barzani reportedly said at the Iraqi opposition conference in Sulaimania that Turkey should not interfere in the Kurds' internal affairs. Meanwhile, the MFA has issued a warning for Turkish citizens to leave Iraq in order to avert 'likely risks.' Some NGOs and labor unions will stage a large rally against the war in Ankara on Saturday.

Cyprus: UN Secretary General Annan, in Cyprus for talks, has suggested that Papadopoulos and Denktas take the third plan to a referendum on March 30, and he invited the two leaders to The Hague on March 10 to sign an agreement. Denktas rejected Annan's offer, saying that the new plan has many 'traps.' "Hurriyet" believes that Annan, seeing Denktas as the largest obstacle to a compromise, intended to by-pass the Turkish Cypriot leader. Papers report that about 70,000 Turkish Cypriots attended a rally against Denktas, with some

demonstrators carrying placards saying 'Rescue us, Annan,' 'We are all Cypriots, let's unite,' and 'Give peace a chance.'

EDITORIAL OPINION: US-Turkey on Iraq

"There is a chance to delay the war" Fehmi Koru suggested in Islamic-intellectual Yeni Safak (2/28): "Even the founding principles of the Turkish republic have been forgotten. Oddly enough, Turkey debated the possibility of preventing a war during the Gulf crisis. . There is not much difference regarding the essential principles and sensitivities about the situation today and the 1990s. Yet I am still looking for an authorized representative who will stand up and ask the very basic question: What has Turkey got to do with somebody else's war? . The parliamentarians better listen to the warning of President Sezer very carefully and wait until international legitimacy has been ensured. The authorization debate at the parliament must be postponed until the next UN resolution."

"The US weighs the importance of Turkey and the Kurds" Sedat Ergin analyzed the reasons for the anti-Turkish sentiment among some Iraqi Kurdish groups in mass appeal Hurriyet (2/28): "There are certain factors and reasons for the hostility, which can be listed as follows:

- 1) the Barzani factor: The threatening, anti-Turkish remarks mostly come from KDP leader Barzani, not from PUK leader Talabani. This is explained by the fact Turkey's border are is under the control of Barzani.
- 2) the psychological factor: Kurdish groups will be uncomfortable if the Turkish army enters northern Iraq. They will consider the presence of a colossal foreign military force -- around 40,000 -- in their territory as a threat to their aspirations for sovereignty.
- 3) Domestic policy considerations: The Kurdish leaders might be trying to address the public at home by making threatening remarks against Turkey.
- 4) the Turkey-US deal: The timing of the Kurdish threats is also very important. They came after details about the political and military agreements discussed by Turkey and the US were leaked to the press. It is clear that Kurdish leaders were disappointed by the guarantees given by the US to Turkey.
- 5) the federation problem: Kurdish leaders might be disappointed by the references to a federation in the political agreement between Turkey and the US. Barzani was planning to form a federation on an ethnic basis in the post-war era. He may very well be disappointed to see the obstacles placed in front of his goal.
- 6) the future of the peshmerges: Once the unified Iraqi army is formed, both Barzani and Talabani will have to dissolve their local forces. The Kurdish leaders must have been bothered by the fact that after the war the US is planning to take back the weapons distributed to the Kurds, and by the fact that this operation will be carried out the observation of the Turks. The Iraqi Kurds are uneasy with the control mechanisms set up by Turkey.
- 7) the deterrent effect of Turkish troops: The Turkish army says it will go into Northern Iraq for humanitarian activities. The Iraqi Kurds, however, see the situation differently. They know that the Turkish army will be present in northern Iraq to avoid 'undesirable developments.' The presence of the Turkish army will restrict the movements of the Kurds and will block their aspirations for independence or for acquiring control of oil-rich regions.
- 8) Turkey-US plan not compatible with Kurdish plans: The plans for a post-war Iraq designed by the US and Turkey are not compatible with the plans of the Iraqi Kurds. The Kurds will have to give up certain privileges they acquired during as a result of the power vacuum, including de-facto sovereignty status, since 1991. Ironically, they might even prefer that Saddam Hussein stays in power.
- 9) Bargaining tool: It is possible that the Iraqi Kurds are deliberately aggravating the tension with Turkey in order to win more support from the US. They hope to change the balances in their favor after the war.
- 10) Suspicions about US intentions: Just like Turkish decision-makers, the Kurds might be suspicious about US intentions in a post-war Iraq. They are afraid that the US will abandon the Kurds by giving major concessions to Turkey.
- 11) The US needs the northern front and wants to increase its strategic cooperation with Turkey to topple Saddam Hussein. Thus, the strategic importance of Turkey weighs more than the importance of the Kurdish groups in the eyes of the US. Nevertheless, Turkey should not forget the possibility that the situation might change after the war."

